How Wisconsin came by its large German element /

HOW WISCONSIN CAME BY ITS LARGE GERMAN ELEMENT. BY KATE ASAPHINE EVEREST, M. A.1

1 Fellow in History, the the University of Wisconsin. All foot-notes in this article, not otherwise signed, are by the author. See her article on “Early Lutheran Immigration to Wisconsin,” in *Trans. Wis. Acad. Sci., Arts, and Letters*, viii., pp. 288–298.— Ed.

Author's Prefatory Note.—This work was done in connection with the historical *seminar* of the University of Wisconsin, under the direction of Professors Frederick J. Turner and Charles H. Haskins. For material and suggestions in the preparation of the paper I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. W. H. Rosenstengel, Prof. Frank Cramer, formerly of Lawrence University, Mr. K. K. Kennan, Capt. Julius Schlaich, Hon. P. V. Deuster, Rev. Theodore Nickel, Hon. John J. Senn, and others. The bulk of material I have obtained from the rich stores of the State Historical Society, whose library officers have throughout tendered me the utmost facilities for research, and have even imported books and pamphlets from Germany, that threw light on the subject of my investigation. I am also indebted to the courtesy of the officers of the Milwaukee free library for the use of books. In the final revision of the work, I have been greatly assisted by Mr. Reuben G. Thwaites, editor of the *Wisconsin Historical Collections*.

The term “German” in this article includes German Austrians, German Bohemians, and German Swiss, where these classes can be ascertained. The census reports. however, ignore the distinction between German and non-German Austrians, Bohemians, and Swiss; the reports of 1850, 1870, 1880, and 1885 do not include Swiss and Austrians, while that of 1860 includes Austrians but not Swiss. Unless otherwise stated, the statistics of German population which I cite include only those born in Germany.

According to the census of 1880, the latest national census available for our purposes, Wisconsin has a larger percentage of German-born residents than any other of the United States; and in its total of German-born population it stands fourth. All of the census reports since 1850 show a decennial increase in Wisconsin, in the percentage of German-born, both in relation to the entire population and to the total foreign-born population of the State.

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Table of German-born population, in Wisconsin.

Census. German-born. Percentage of entire population of state. Percentage of foreign-born population of state. 1850 38,064 11.3 32.4 1860 123,879 15.97 44.7 1870 162,314 15.39 45.0 1880 184,328 14.0 45.0 1885 265,756 16.99 53.8

This might seem to indicate a decrease since 1860, but were the children of German parentage born in Wisconsin,—now counted as native American population,—included in these estimates, it would show very different results. For the first time, the census of 1880 gives us the natives of Wisconsin of German parentage; the number of those with both parents German is stated as 226,325, which added to the German-born gives a total of 410,653 German-Americans in a population of 1,315,497, or 31.2 per cent.1 Considering then the fact that in 1850 at least a large percent. of the Germans in the state were born in Germany, it is clear that there has been a decided increase in the percentage of Germans in the state. Moreover, according to the state census of 1885, they formed 16.99 per cent. of the total population, which in comparison with the 14 per cent. of 1880 indicates a very striking increase.

1 J. E. Chamberlain gives the proportion of Germans in Wisconsin in 1880. as 35 per cent. — *Century Mag*., vi., p. 767.

Some further statistics will enable us to see when the largest numbers came to the state. Löher, writing in 1847, says, “For three years the immigrants have turned to Texas, Iowa, and Wisconsin; of the 100,000 German immigrants of the past year, at least 25,000

have gone to Wisconsin."2 But we must regard these figures as very large, for he further estimates the number of Germans in Wisconsin

2 Franz Löher's *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika* (Cincinnati and Leipzig, 1847), p. 278, This work is referred to below, as *Löher*.

301 in 1846 as 100,000, and the population of the state as 250,000.1 Some state immigration reports have been published, which, though very incomplete,2 give us some idea of the period when the largest numbers came to Wisconsin.

1 *Ibid*., p. 355.

2 Statistics were obtained for Milwaukee only, or sometimes for Chicago; while the northern ports were entirely neglected, and even those for Milwaukee and Chicago were incomplete.

The first report which contains a definite statement of the number of immigrants was made in 1853 by Herman Hærtel, of Milwaukee, then state immigration commissioner. It was his estimate that from 16,000 to 18,000 Germans came to Wisconsin during the eight months which his report covered,—figures which he states are only approximate,—and that the German immigration of 1853 exceeded that of the three years next preceding; and though the entire immigration to the United States during 1853 had little if at all exceeded that of the year preceding, Wisconsin received at least 15 per cent. more than in 1852.3

3 *Governor's Mess. and Accomp. Docs., Wis*., 1854.

The immigration of 1854 is said to have been the largest to Wisconsin.4 Fred W. Horn was commissioner for that year, and his estimate for the months of May, June, and July, gathered from the number who visited his office, from the inspection of the books of some of the ticket offices, and from other means of observation, was, that during that period the number of German immigrants to Wisconsin could not have been less than 16,000. From information received by him in those months, he judged that the emigration during

the summer and fall of 1854 would be considerable, and that Wisconsin as usual would receive more than her share. Apparently no further report was made until 1870. From May to November (inclusive), that year, the arrival in Wisconsin of Germans intending to settle, aggregated 9,127, of Whom 7,037 came by way of Chicago, and 2,090 direct to Milwaukee. It was thought as

4 Anton Eickhoff's *In der neuen Heimath: Geschichtliche Mittheilungen über die deutschen Einwanderer in allen Theilen der Union* (New York, 1885).

302 many more came by way of Green Bay, Manitowoc, and other lake ports.

The following statistics of arrivals of Wisconsin-bound Germans are obtainable from other state immigration reports:1

1 The report for 1872 includes the months April to November for Milwaukee, and May to August for Chicago; that of 1873 is April to November for Milwaukee, and May to August for Chicago; 1874, April I to December 15: 1875, for the calendar year; 1880, May to December 31; while those for 1881–84 give the total for the year.

1872 *

* For Milwaukee and Chicago (Wisconsin bound).

5,190

1873 * 3,031

1874 †

† For Milwaukee only. No report for Chicago.

2,458

1875 † 1,479

1879 † 2,702

1880 * 8079

1881 * 17,074

1882 † 18,922

1883 † 17,446

1884 † 14539

The number of German-born in the state, at each census from 1850 to 1885, is given in our opening table (p. 300). These figures show that the largest German immigration has been in the decades 1840 to 1850, 1850 to 1860, and 1880 to 1890. To be more exact, we may place the largest immigration periods in the years 1846–54. and 1881–84, which are not only periods that correspond to those of the greatest German immigration to the United States, but they are also the times when Wisconsin probably received a much larger proportion of Germans than other states.

The causes of the presence of this large German element among us must be looked for, not primarily in plans to form a German state in the Northwest, though such plans have undoubtedly had their influence, but they are rather to be looked for in economic, political, and social influences. Among these were the natural advantages which this state possessed for Germans in the way of climate and productiveness, the low price of lands,—due to the abundance of government land and the peculiar policy of the state in disposing of its land grants for schools at low prices, for the sake of attracting immigration, —and the opening of the 303 state at an opportune moment. The German spirit in music, politics, and social life which early showed itself, particularly in Milwaukee, and which had its influence in shaping a liberal state constitution, doubtless attracted the better elements. Again, the success of the Germans who came early to the State, particularly

those from north Germany, has served to draw many others from the same region; and finally, the state immigration agents, many of whom have been Germans, have directed their attention chiefly to Germany, with some success.

Ideal Schemes—The Effort to Form a German State .

While the process of German immigration and settlement has been determined largely by practical considerations in regard to the forming of homes and obtaining the means of subsistence, there was for some years an agitation both here and in Germany, which was intended to concentrate German settlement in the United States, and to widen the field of German influence. This was the effort to form a German state in America.1

1 To this term two meanings seem to have been given: first, it meant a German settlement with its own local government, which was designed to become the centre of a large German element; again, it was more commonly used to refer to some one of the United States which was to be Germanized.

Since the awakening of national feeling in Germany in the early part of this century, there has been a growing desire among German patriots to preserve the national spirit and customs. It is peculiar to modern German emigration, that by it no territory has been added to Germany, and that in great part the emigrants have been lost to the Fatherland. Accordingly, it has been a problem with many recent German writers on economics and colonization, how to prevent this apparent misfortune, and to this end various plans have been proposed.

Societies were formed in Germany with the object of making organized settlements under the direction of chosen leaders. The most important of these was at Giessen. This 304 society was formed in 1833, its membership embracing several hundred persons in Hesse, Westphalia, and the Saxonies, among them many wealthy and educated men. In 1834 a large delegation from this company crossed to America in two ships, intending to form a new Germany beyond the seas. They possessed abundant resources for carrying out

their plan, but the enterprise failed on account of the inexperience of the leaders, and their ignorance, not only of the new country, but of practical life in general. Many left at each stopping place west of the seaboard. The remnant settled near St. Louis. The bell which they brought for their proposed *stadt haus* was hung up in a barn, and the fine telescope for the intended observatory was left to grace a log cabin.1

1 Löher, p. 287.

As a consequence of disappointment attending the political reaction in Germany after the uprising of 1830, many sought liberty in America. In 1832, in Rhenish Bavaria, it was planned to send a deputation to the United States to communicate with our government in regard to purchasing a tract of land to be settled by Germans and to be called a new Germany.2 But I cannot learn that anything came of the project.

2 *Niles's Register*, xliii., pp. 196 *et seq*. The comment is as follows: “We shall give all such as these a hearty welcome, but the idea of settling in a large and compact body cannot be approved. In coming hither they should expect that their children, at least, will * * * be fully incorporated into the body of citizens.” See also Neumann's *Geschichte der Vereinigten Staaten*, it., p. 496.

On this side of the ocean, the agitation of the question of a German state in North America began about 1835. The immigration that commenced in the early thirties included many educated young men of every profession in Germany, who were largely political refugees. The new atmosphere into which they came was in strong contrast with their aspirations. They felt the American life to be sordid and low, both in religion and politics; they complained, too, of a lack of appreciation of the higher ideals, and a tendency to ignore the worth of the German character.

EXPLANATION. Through an oversight on the part of the lithographer, the total population as ascertained by the Census of 1890 is given for the several counties in the accompanying map. This has no connection with the author's computation of relative

density of German population, which is based on the Census of 1880, the latest available for the purpose.— Ed .

305 Such sentiments as these gave rise to the plan to found in America a German state, or young Germany. Most of the refugees were collected in New York and Philadelphia. In New York, a society was formed in 1835, called “Germania.” Its object was to maintain a strong German character, German customs and education, to work for a better condition of things in Germany, and to assist other refugees with advice and material aid.1 The United States government having granted territory to the Polish fugitives,2 “Germania” sent a memorial to congress, says Löher, asking for land for the German fugitives. and offering to pay for it after a period of time, their object being to set up an establishment here, in which to work for Germany. But congress refused their request. Their next plan was to direct German settlers to some one state of the Union, and thus to get control of it and make it a German state. There was disagreement, however, as to the place. Some wished Texas, others Oregon, while the majority were in favor of the states between the Mississippi and the Great Lakes.3 Later, the society disbanded, and its members were scattered over the United States, many of them as newspaper editors.

1 Gustav Körner's *Das Deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Cincinnati, l880), p. 108.

2 A memorial was sent to congress by two hundred and thirty-five Polish refugees, asking for 1and; and June 30, 1834, an act was passed granting them thirty-six sections of public land in Illinois or Michigan. After ten years a patent was to be given, on the condition that they should have actually inhabited and cultivated the land and should have paid the minimum price.— *Acts, 23rd Cong*., 1st sess. (1834), p. 153. For memorial and committee report, see *Senate Docs*., vol. iv., p. 313.

3 *Löher*, p. 281.

These plans found sympathy in Philadelphia, among the bolder spirits. In 1836 a meeting was held, at which the question of forming a German state was debated, a constitution was adopted, and directors chosen.4 Two Pennsylvania newspapers worked for it, the *Alte und Neue Welt* of Philadelphia, edited by Dr. Wesselhöft, a German fugitive, 20

4 *Das Deutsche Element*, p. 70.

306 and the *Adler des Westens* , of Pittsburgh, which published plans for founding a state. Another project was united with this: namely, to Germanize Pennsylvania, by establishing the German language in the courts and schools on an equality with the English, but the plan was defeated in the Pennsylvania legislature. The only practical result of this movement was the purchase of 12,000 acres of land in Missouri, and the founding of the town of Hermann, in Gasconade county, on the Missouri river.

Löher, who in 1847 wrote of this movement in behalf of a German-American state, spoke thus in favor of it: “Germans can remain Germans in America; they will mingle and intermarry with non-Germans and adopt their ways, but they can still remain essentially German. They can plant the vine on the hills and drink it with the happy song and dance, they can have German schools and universities, German literature and art, German science and philosophy, German courts and assemblies,—in short they can form a German state, in which the German language is as much the popular and official language as the English is now, and in which the German spirit rules.”1

1 *Löher*, p. 502.

To the question, Where shall this state be? he replies, “The customary answer is, in the Northwest; for the ‘ruling centre’ of North America will be between the waters of the Ohio and Missouri rivers.” The prospect as he saw it was, that the Northwest2 would become predominantly German, since the Irish remained in the east or in the cities, and the Americans were scattering through the Far West. Löher favored the plan of making one state a centre in which to concentrate, and proposed as suitable for that purpose,

Wisconsin, Iowa, or Texas. The advantages of these states were, a climate favorable to the Germans, natural advantages and adaptability to agriculture, and the fact that they already had relatively the largest German populations. He further urged the fact that they are so far

2 By the Northwest, I mean the old political Northwest, the states in the triangle between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and the Great Lakes.

307 west that the Anglo-American element had not yet gotten control, that there were millions of acres of unsold and fruitful land, that there the immigrant was worth most, and the backwoodsman makes no quarrel with him about his language. The constitutions of these new states, too, were liberal. Texas would have been his preference had it remained apart from the Union, but otherwise he expressed no choice.1

1 A similar movement, which shows the tendency of the time, though with a very different object in view, was that of the *Arbeiter-bund* or labor union in New York, about 1848, at the head of which was Weitling, a German revolutionist. This society planned to establish a communistic settlement in Wisconsin.—Ely's *Labor Movement*, p. 220.

Later, the plan of Germanizing an American state was generally given up by the German political refugees in America, but writers of that nationality continued to agitate it, though they would put it under the direction and support of the German government. Thus the same plan is advocated by Brater, in the Bluntschli-Brater *Staats-Wörterbuch* , published in 1857. In opposition to those who favored colonization and settlement under government direction to other lands than America, he maintained that North America was the only goal of emigration worthy of official support, and the only one within the power of government to support, since the masses were turning in that direction. He follows Löher and others in choosing the Northwest, since the prosperity and preference of the Germans must be regarded as the best evidence of its suitability. To the objection that the Anglo-American element might interfere, he answers that the legislative power of the American central government is too limited to make it lawfully possible for the Anglo. Americans successfully

to oppose this danger to their sovereign authority; though it might hasten a catastrophe feared by many observers of American affairs: namely, the breaking up of the Union into two or more groups of states, in part under Anglo-American, in part under German rule.2

2 “Wir dürfen ebensowenig auf die Frage eingehen, welchen Eindruck bet den Anglo-Amerikanern die Erscheinung eines vorwiegend deutschen Staates und das Auftreten deutscher Repräsentanten in Washington hervorrufen möchte. Jedenfalls ist die Verfassungs-mächtige Macht der Central-organe gegenüber den Einzelstaaten zu beschränkt, als das es den Angloamerikanern dann noch möglich wäre, dieser Gefährdung ihrer Alleinherrschaft auf gesetzlichem Weg erfolgreich entgegenzutreten. Gewaltschritte würden einem schwer überwindlichen Widerstande die Deutschen begegnen und vielleicht nur die Katastrophe beschleunigen, die yon manchen Kennern amerikanischer Zustände vorhergesagt wird: die Auflösung der Union in mehrere selbststäandige Staaten-Komplexe, zum Theil unter Anglo-amerikanischer, zum Theil unter deutscher Herrschaft.“—Bluntschli-Brater, *Staats Wörterbuch*, i., p. 598.

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To decide upon a suitable place for colonization, Robert yon Mohl, a prominent publicist, recommended the proposition before the Würtemberg chamber, that a commission consisting of a landed proprietor, a physician, and a statesman, be sent to choose the most suitable place for German settlement, and that they report the conditions,—moral, physical, and otherwise.1

1 *Ibid*., *note*, p. 598.

William Roscher, in his *Political Economy* , published in 1878, urges that the German government provide for emigration, but he adds: “Much might be gained if the German emigrants to the United States would concentrate themselves in one state, and thus make it a German state. For many reasons, Wisconsin is best adapted to that purpose.”2

2 Roscher's *Principles of Political Economy* (Lalor, trans., Chicago, 1878), it., p. 371, note. See also Roscher and Jannasch, *Kolonien, Kolonial-politik, und Auswanderung* (Leipsic, 1885), p. 344, note.

An example of how it was proposed to carry out this movement may be found in Karl Heinzen's plan, published in 1855 in the Louisville *Pioneer* , of which he was the editor. He suggested that a beginning be made with 50,000 acres of land, for which a fund should be raised; that an executive committee be appointed, whose duty it should be to take charge of the fund and to form the most favorable regulations for the first settlement; that the settlers should be provided on credit with land, and the equipment necessary for pioneer life; when the number reached two hundred, a constitution should be drawn up, and a demonstrated 309 state formed, to become by its educational institutions an outpost of culture. For this purpose some one of the Northwestern states, he thought, would be the most suitable.1

1 *Wisconsin Demokrat*. May 10, 1855, a German weekly newspaper, published in Manitowoc between 1853 and 1866, by Karl Röser. The article is quoted from the *Pioneer*, which was started in 1854 in Louisville, Kentucky, by Karl Heinzen. It was later removed to Cincinnati, thence to New York, and finally in 1859 to Boston.

That this movement came to nothing in the way that was anticipated was inevitable from the character of the Germans,—“in thought gigantic, in action disunited.” Löher, the author of this sentiment, thus further characterizes the German hereditary sins: “Ideas spring up like mushrooms, and our thoughts readily soar to heaven, but when the time for execution comes, * * * then men are disunited, * * * and matters are left to take their own course.”2

2 *Löher*, p. 280.

In the western states many large German settlements were formed. especially in Ohio. but they did not become centres of attraction, nor of any political importance. The masses

of the colonists had German sentiments, but not the German ideals. They would not suffer themselves to be directed by their countrymen, especially since the leaders, who were often idealists and free-thinkers, were men far removed from the general German sentiment; but the immigrants settled rather where business interests were most favorable. The general sentiment of later years is well expressed by Friedrich Kapp and Carl Schurz: “The well-being of the Germans,” says Kapp, “does not lie in separation from the American educational interests nor in fantastic dreams of founding a German state in America—a German Utopia. * * * A German nation within the American they cannot be, but they can throw the rich treasures of their life and thought into the struggle for political and human interests, and their influence will penetrate the more deeply and create for them a wider field of activity, 310 the less peculiar they make it.”1 In a recent speech by Carl Schurz in New York, on German-American Day, the following thought is expressed: “Let us never forget that we as Germans are not called upon here to form a separate nationality, but rather to contribute to the American nationality the strongest there is in us, and in place of our weakness to substitute the strength wherein our fellow-Americans excel us, and to blend it with our wisdom. We should never forget that in the political life of this republic, we as Germans have no peculiar interests, but that the universal well-being is ours also.”

1 Friedrich Kapp's *Die Deutschen im Staate New York, während des achtzehnten Yahrhunderts. Geschichtsblätter herausgegeben von Karl Schurz* (New York, 1884), p. 228.

However, the agitation, while it lasted, served to keep alive German feeling in America, and to call particular attention to several of the western states. Wisconsin, especially since 1848, has been very widely favored. It is a significant comment upon its popularity and advantages, that Roscher should have chosen it unhesitatingly. Were it possible to trace the effects of the agitation, we should look to those who have directed emigration, and to the leaders of large bodies of settlers, and such have frequently chosen Wisconsin.2

2 A society in Halberstadt, Germany, investigated the question of location, probably about 1848, and reported that for natural advantages and richness of the soil and a healthful climate, well suited to Germans, Wisconsin was the best state.—Theodore Wettstein's *Der Nordamerikanische Freistaat Wisconsin* (Elberfeld, 1851), p. 188.

In 1855, the Cincinnati society “Kansas Ansiedelungsverein,” founded with the object of directing Germans to Kansas, changed their plans and favored Wisconsin as the best state for Germans. It was said that a committee of the society was sent to purchase land, and others from Louisville joined them.— *Wisconsin Demokrat*, Sept. 25, 1855.

In 1856, a colony of Germans from Pittsburg took up about 27,000 acres of choice lands in Marathon county, at Little Bluff Falls.

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Location of the Germans in the United States .

But while the ideals of German revolutionists have been unrealized, Germans have, without previous concert, continued to concentrate in some few states of the Union. It is a curious fact that German settlement in the United States follows a belt beginning with Pennsylvania and running due west through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri.1 In general this may be accounted for by two facts: First, the Germans generally avoid the southern states, because they are not acquainted with the products of the south, while they understand the cultivation of wheat, rye, oats, and other northern products; again, land in the south, before the War of the Rebellion, was held by large land-owners who rarely sold, and free labor was degraded by competition with slave labor:2 the climate of the south, moreover, was found to be less suitable to Germans. Another reason for their preference was, that the Germans were searching for work. and particularly for land, which latter was abundant in that tier of states during the period of their immigration.

1 Bluntschli-Brater, *Staats-Wörterbuch*, i., p. 588.

2 Carl H. Schmidt's *Prämie des Nord-westen* (Manitowoc, 1884), p. 23. The same for 1886, p. 52.

Kapp, writing in 1870, says: “As nearly as a calculation can be made, it has been ascertained that out of one hundred continental immigrants, seventy-five go west, and twenty-five remain in the great cities; while of the Irish and English, twenty-five settle in the country, and seventy-five remain in the eastern cities.”3 Thus the new North-western states opening to settlement between 1820 and 1850 naturally received the great mass of Germans who poured out of Germany in those years, owing to political agitations and hard times. The immigrants who came because of the reaction following the uprisings of 1830, settled chiefly in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri;4 while others

3 Fr. Kapp's *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York*, pp. 118–158. See also *Löher*, p. 275.

4 *Das Deutsche Element*, p. 291.

312 went to New York, Pennsylvania, and Canada.1 But since then, and especially since 1845, they have settled in Wisconsin and Iowa.2

1 *Löher*. p. 275.

2 The statistics of the Erie canal show that furniture destined for Wisconsin passed over that thoroughfare as follows: 42 tons in 1838, 742 tons in 1839, 816 tons in 1840, 1,190 tons in 1841. 1,985 tons in 1842, while for Michigan, Indiana and Pennsylvania it had fallen off more than one-half, and for Ohio and Illinois more than one-third. The main routes of travel to the west were by New York and New Orleans. The former. by which the travel was most extensive, it was estimated. had brought from 50,000 to 60,000 settlers to Wisconsin by 1843; while about 10,000 had come up the Mississippi into our state. It is natural then, that Wisconsin should have received a larger immigration than Iowa and the more western states at that period.— *Hunt's Merch. Mag*., x., p. 541.

Physical Features .

Of all the Northwestern states, no one excelled Wisconsin, and perhaps no state equalled it in natural advantages especially suited to a quick development. Wisconsin is bounded on the north and east by two of the largest inland lakes in the world. The western boundary is the great Mississippi. Running diagonally across the state is the valley occupied by Green Bay and the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. Situated thus between the limits of the two most important waterways in the United States, Wisconsin possessed great advantages in the way of routes of travel and means of transportation, an especially important factor in the early days. The prospects for Wisconsin in that respect were sometimes greatly magnified. It was suggested by one German writer, that we should doubtless soon see Bremen steamers in Milwaukee harbor.3 By means of the canal connecting the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, a limited navigation was possible from Lake Michigan through Green Bay to the Mississippi. Before railroads were built, it was declared that Wisconsin had better means of communication,

3 Alexander Ziegler's *Skizzen einer Reise durch Nordamerika und Westindien mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des deutschen Elements der Auswanderung und den landwirthschaftlichen Verhältnisse in dem neuen Staate Wisconsin* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1849), pt. i., p. 229.

313 and hence a better market, than many of the eastern states.1 “The soils of the state,” says President Chamberlin, “are of a high degree of fertility and permanence.”2 The forest lands may be roughly included in the district north of a line running from Racine due northwest. The northern half was originally covered by an almost unbroken forest of hard wood and evergreen; and along the eastern border of the state, except at the extreme south, is a tract of heavy timber.

1 Gustav Richter's *Der Nordamerikanische Freistaat Wisconsin* (Wesel, 1849), p. 6.

2 *Encyclopœdia Britannica* (9th ed.), article “Wisconsin”

The effect of these physical features upon German immigration is shown by the distribution of the Germans in the state. Considering the census reports of 1880 by counties, we find the following results: In eighteen counties located, with two exceptions, in the eastern and north-central part of the state, forming about one-third of the whole number, and having 42.5 per cent. of the total population of the state, there were 66.9 per cent. of the total German (foreign-born) population.3 Thus the Germans are seen to be massed in the eastern and north-central counties, a position which corresponds markedly with that of the heavily-wooded districts; they have shown their preference first for the wooded lands near the main routes of travel, namely the eastern counties, and from there have spread to the north-central parts of the state, into the deeper forests.

3 See map. Were we able to obtain statistics of native-born Germans for each county, this percentage would doubtless be largely increased.

Another physical feature of Wisconsin which is of great importance is the climate, which is remarkably good. The winters are severe, but owing to the dry atmosphere are less penetrating than in more humid climates. The extremes of temperature are tempered by the proximity of the Great Lakes. The state is comparatively free from the fevers of the states to the south, and is considered one of the most healthful in the Union. This one fact placed our state above many whose advantages in other respects 314 were fully equal to hers. Thus while Michigan resembles Wisconsin in many respects, the climate is far less favorable.

Finances and Constitution .

When Wisconsin was admitted into the Union, there was no territorial debt, and no large debt was incurred until the war;1 while Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana had large debts on account of the projects for internal improvements.2 The Milwaukee *Courier* of August 31, 1842, has the following quotation from the Mohawk (N. Y.) *Courier* : “Immigration turns now to Wisconsin, Missouri and Iowa, for Michigan. Illinois and Indiana have public debts.”

1 *Governor's Messages, Wis*., for 1853 and 1863; and *Treasurer's Report, Wis*., for 1849.

2 This was urged in pamphlets. See *Der Nordamerikanische Freistaat Wisconsin*, p. 7.

Another important fact had its influence, and doubtless a very decided one, upon German immigration. The constitution framed for Wisconsin in 1848 was a very liberal one as regards the rights of foreigners, only one year's residence being required before the privilege of voting was allowed. Wisconsin was the only state possessing so liberal a franchise in 1848. In 1851 Indiana put a similar clause in her constitution; Minnesota in 1857, and other states followed within ten or fifteen years. Wisconsin's one-year policy was adopted in great measure through the influence of Dr. Franz Hübschmann and Moritz Schöffler, German delegates from Milwaukee to the constitutional conventions of 1846 and 1847–48, respectively.3

3 *Jour. Wis. Const. Conv*., 1846, pp. 24, 29: and *Jour*. of 1847–48, pp. 31, 129, 190, *et seq*. For Dr. Hübschmann's speech on the franchise, see *Wisconsin Banner*, November 7, 1846, a German paper published in Milwaukee from 1844 to 1855. See also Rudolph A. Koss's *Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, 1871), pp. 231, 258.

German Books and Pamphlets on Wisconsin .

All these advantages, with others, were urged in numerous German writings. Probably the first of these was written by C. E. Hasse, and was published in Grimma in 315 1841. Hasse had travelled in Wisconsin, and was so favorably impressed with its good features that he wrote advising Germans to settle here. This is said to have had a marked influence on German immigration to Wisconsin, and particularly to Milwaukee.1

1 *In der Neuen Heimath*, p. 368.

But it was between 1847 and 1850 that the most of the works were written. One Fleischman published about 1847 a book on the climate and resources of the United

States, which was widely circulated in Germany, and is said to have had very much to do with the great influx of immigration to Wisconsin about that period. In describing Wisconsin. he dwells chiefly upon the similarity of the climate and soil of the state with those of the northern provinces of Germany, and likewise points to its high degree of healthfulness, comparing it with the fever states—Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri.

Dr. Carl de Haas came with other young men to Wisconsin in 1847, from Elberfeld (Rhine). He settled in Calumet, and from there wrote a work called *Winke für Auswanderer* , which was published in Elberfeld and Iserlohn in 1848. As university students, they had planned to come to America, and had Texas in mind; but a description of Wisconsin in the *Barmer Zeitung* ,2 particularly the region about Milwaukee, and a letter from Johann Mentis, of Calumet, induced them to come to Wisconsin. After about six months' residence he writes, “No one of us, and almost no one who came before us to Calumet, has regretted his settlement; on the contrary the majority are contented and happy.” He preferred Calumet to Milwaukee, as more healthful.3

2 Published at Barman, Rhine.

3 *Nord Amerika Wisconsin, Calumet: Winke für Auswanderer. Von Dr. Carl de Haas*.

Another pamphlet, directed to people in the same Rhine region, was written by Gustav Richter, a citizen of Manitowoc and a land agent there. His work was published in Wesel in 1849, and was designed to bring his fellow-countrymen 316 from the Rhine countries to Wisconsin. He particularly recommends Manitowoc and Sheboygan, with Calumet, Fond du Lac, and Winnebago counties. As advantages, he urges Wisconsin's healthful climate and its adaptibility to German immigrants, and regards its market advantages as far more favorable then those of many of the eastern states. The prospect of a railroad from the Pacific to Lake Michigan is urged as likely to develop the state, and particularly the northern part.1

1 *Der Nordamerikanische Freistaat Wisconsin*, pp. 7 *et seq*.

In 1847, Freimund Goldmann came to Wisconsin. and his letters home were published by his father, Dr. Goldmann, pastor in Gross Dahlum. He found that no government land remained about Milwaukee, and was advised to go to the western part of the state, as more healthful than the lakeshore region. He states these points as favorable to Wisconsin: (1) It is healthier than the southern states; (2) government land and cultivated farms were both to be had—the latter since many Americans had at that time caught the California fever and gone west; (3) Wisconsin was a young and flourishing state; (4) markets were good, by railroad and boat.2 He was anxious to induce other Germans to come to the district, and offered to loan the use of forty acres free of charge, to each man who would come for five years.

2 *Freimund Goldmann's Briefe aus Wisconsin in Nord-Amerika. Herausgegeben von Dr. G. Goldmann* (Leipzig, 1849).

Wilhelm Dames wrote a pamphlet which was published at Meurs, Prussia. in 1849, entitled *Wie Sieht es in Wisconsin Aus?* Dames settled near Ripon, having come over with friends from Wesel. Wisconsin had been recommended to him as the best land for the Germans, on account of its healthfulness and excellent drinking water. “It has,” he writes, “without doubt the best water and the soundest climate, as soon as one leaves Lake Michigan, of any of the United States.”

In 1848, Theodore Wettstein, a man of influence in his native town, came to Milwaukee with a large body of emigrants 317 from the Wupper valley—Barmen and vicinity. He wrote a work on Wisconsin, published in Germany in 1850, which is particularly commendable for its impartial character. “The stream of settlers,” he writes, “turns now to Wisconsin; and rightly, one must think, when he sees the soil and splendid forests.” lie found that many immigrants were deciding to go to Indiana, but from what he had heard he thought it very unwise, since almost every day immigrants came to Wisconsin who had lived in the

former state, and who knew not how to paint fully its evils. Of Wisconsin's good features, he mentions its position with regard to water communication by lakes, rivers, and projected canals, and the almost flat or slightly roiling surface, which makes the laying of railroads very easy; while good strong wood, suitable for that purpose. is abundant. Again, he writes, “Of all states in America, Wisconsin has a climate the best suited to Europeans. and particularly to Germans;” but he claims that no part of America is as healthful as Germany.1

1 *Wettstein*, pp. 150. 202, etc.

About this time, Alexander Ziegler travelled in America, and wrote a prolonged description of his travels, particularly in Wisconsin. He gives a very pleasant picture of Milwaukee, its growth and German society, the gardens, the music, and the German influence in political life. In regard to Wisconsin. he mentions the size of the state, its sound climate, the excellent soil, mineral wealth. advantageous position, and the favorable connection of the interior of the state with the outer world. All these advantages he declares could allow the impartial observer only the most favorable judgment concerning this state.2

2 *Ziegler*, pt. i., pp. 223 *et seq*.

The mineral regions on Lake Superior and along the Mississippi river were described in a work by W. C. L. Koch, a member of the council of miners in the Duchy of Brunswick. It was published in Göttingen in 1851, and purports to be a guide for German emigrants. lie describes the region after visiting it; and advises the German laborers 318 who are thinking of emigrating, especially miners, smelters, forest laborers, coal-burners, and builders, to go to the lead regions, where labor is scarce and wages are excellent.

In this way, the advantages of various regions of Wisconsin were brought to the notice of Germans; It is impossible to estimate the influence of these works, but the advantages they emphasize were those which the Germans were in search of: namely, good lands, within their means, and the conditions most favorable to health and liberty. It is plain, then,

that the features of Wisconsin most attractive to them were: the climate well suited to Germans, the good soil, finely-wooded lands at low prices, and the good markets both with the east and south; while the constitution offered them a chance for political influence.

Wisconsin in favor in 1848 .

Many Germans who came about 1848 confirm the statement that Wisconsin was favorably known at that time. Ziegler declares that he came with great preference for Wisconsin, which was receiving especial notice in Europe.1 “In New York,” says Charles L. Encking,2 “every hotel-keeper and railroad agent, every one who was approached for advice, directed men to Wisconsin.” Mr. Wettstein also states that from all sides he heard the most undivided agreement, and men who were acquainted with the historical development of the United States and had sharply watched its growth, gave with one accord the new state of Wisconsin the most advantageous outlook.3 In St. Louis, Rev. H. A. Winter,4 of that city, heard repeatedly of Wisconsin's healthful climate, and decided go come here.

1 “Wie überhaupt nach den Vereinigten Staaten, so war yon dem alternden Deutschland aus mein Blick mit besonderer Vorliebe nach dem Paradiese des gelobten Landes Amerika, dem in jugendlicher Frische und Schönheit erblühenden Wisconsin gerichtet.”—*Ziegler*, pt. i., p. 199.

2 A citizen of Fond du Lac, with whom I had a conversation regarding this matter.

3 *Wettstein*, p. 133.

4 Now a citizen of Madison. He has materially assisted me in reference to authorities.

Thus both in Germany and America, Wisconsin was “booming” at the period when the discontent in the fatherland and the consequent flood of immigration were approaching their climax, which occurred in the year 1854. Between 1844 and 1854, Germans to

the number of 1,226,393 emigrated to the United States. In Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, meanwhile, the greater part of the government land had been sold. Much of the rest was in the hands of speculators; thus land there was high and not abundant. In Wisconsin, on the other hand, sales did not begin in the land offices at Green Bay and Mineral Point until 1835, and in Milwaukee not until 1839. Here, then, there was an abundance of excellent land at low prices.

As I have before stated (p. 302), the German immigration to Wisconsin reached its first climax in 1854, the same year that German immigration to the United States attained a high-water mark not equalled until 1883–84, when Wisconsin again obtained more than her due share of increase. The policy of the state in appointing a commissioner of immigration, and in disposing of its lands at low prices, probably contributed in some measure to this result.

Work of the Commissioner of Immigration .

A law passed in 1852 provided that a commissioner of immigration should be appointed, who should reside in New York city during the year, and whose duty it should be to give information to immigrants in regard to Wisconsin.1 Gysbert Van Steenwyk, of La Crosse, was appointed to the office, the same year. In his report, he states that he made it his object to become acquainted with the officers most closely connected with immigration, to distribute pamphlets, and to advertise in the European newspapers, chiefly the German. He engaged the services of a German assistant, since the German emigration to the west. and especially to Wisconsin, was the largest. According to his statement, no other western state had a lawfully-appointed representative

1 *Laws of Wis*., 1852, p. 665.

320 in New York, although the governor of Iowa had recommended the appointment of one. Van Steenwyk found it difficult to deal with forwarding agents and runners, who naturally favored Wisconsin, but disliked any interference with their overcharges.1

1 *Assemb. Jour., Wis. Leg*., 1853, *Appendix*.

In 1853, Herman Härtel, a German land agent resident in Milwaukee, was appointed immigration commissioner. According to his report, he had been foe many years accustomed to visit New York regularly in the line of his own business, and had lost no opportunity to inquire into the condition of emigration. He, also, used the New York and European press to present Wisconsin's advantages, giving a description of various localities, the commerce of the state, its minerals. timber. agricultural resources, and climate. Among the journals which he selected for advertisement, he mentions various German papers in America, as well as in Leipzig, Cassel, Näremberg, Basel, Bremen, and other places in Germany. He states that within the eight months that his report covers, he had received and answered three hundred and seventeen letters from Europe, and that over 3,000 people had visited his office, of whom two-thirds were Germans. Often money was sent to him from people in Wisconsin, to assist friends and relatives on their arrival at New York. Dr. Hildebrandt, of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, was at that time United States consul at Bremen. and he gave Mr. Härtel valuable assistance in circulating information. Härtel's report states that nearly thirty thousand pamphlets were distributed, of which one-half found their way 50 Europe.2

2 *Gov. Mess. and Accomp. Docs., Wis*., 1854.

In 1854, Fred W. Horn. of Ozaukee county, was Wisconsin's commissioner of immigration in New York city. He used similar means of advertising, and of assisting immigrants. At this time the commissioner established a branch office in Quebec, but the German immigration through Quebec was small. The existence of the Wisconsin commission was then widely known throughout Europe, from 321 the advertisements that had been generally inserted in the newspapers.1

1 The report for 1854 was not printed.

In 18552 the office was discontinued, and was not revived until 1867.

2 *Laws of Wis*., 1855, p. 8.

Wisconsin's Land Policy .

The established policy of Wisconsin has been to offer the land granted her for school purposes, immediately and at low prices, for the sake of attracting immigration.3 These grants were larger than those made to the older states. In 1838 congress granted to the Territory seventy-two sections for the use and support of a university; and the sixteenth section in each township for common schools. The 500,000 acres employed in other states for internal improvements were added to the endowment for schools. To this was added in 1854, for university use, seventy-two sections as an equivalent for the salt-spring lands, amounting to 92,160 acres. By 1886 swamp lauds to the amount of 3,071,459 acres had been patented to the state, fifty per cent. of which were added to the school endowment. Altogether the state has received nearly four million acres of land for school and university purposes, and the greater part of these lands have been offered for sale at the minimum government price of $1.25 per acre.4 Being selected in remote regions,5 they were appraised at low prices; but 21

3 In the preamble to a law making a state university appropriation, we find the following: “Whereas, It has been the settled policy of the state of Wisconsin to offer for sale and dispose of its lands granted by congress to the state for educational purposes, at such a low price per acre as would induce immigration and location thereon by actual settlers.”—*Laws of Wis*., 1872, p. 114.

4 As late as 1871, according to a state immigration pamphlet for that year, 56,000 acres belonging to the state were offered for sale in Adams county at 50 cents an acre; 20,000 in Marathon county at from 50 cents to $1.25 per acre; 100,000 in Wood county at the same rates; 94,000 in Shawano county at from $1.25 to $2.25 per acre.

5 The 24,000 acres were selected in 1863 in Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Marathon, Polk, Oconto, and Shawano counties.—Butterfield's *Hist. Univ. of Wis*., p. 106.

322 since they were excellent lands and were sold on credit, the demand for them was very great.1

1 “The lands [school] have generally been situated in new and unimportant parts of the state, and surrounded by lands of the government have seldom been appraised higher than ten shillings per acre—the government price. They have been brought into market under low appraisements and readily sold, on account of the credit given; whilst the lands of the government in their vicinity remained undisposed of.”—Report of the joint select committee to investigate the offices of the land commissioners, etc., in *Assemb. Jour., Wis. Leg*., 1856. *Appendix*, ii., p. 81.

By 1886, of the school lands—amounting to 1,458,649 acres—only 164,539 remained unsold; the rest had been sold at an average price of $1.87 per acre. Of the 240,000 acres of the agricultural grant, all but 19,889 acres had been sold at an average of $1.27 per acre. Of the swamp lands, aggregating 3,0.1,459.61 acres—all but 476,602 acres of the fifty per cent devoted to schools had been sold.2

2 Knight's “History and Management of Federal Land Grants for Education in the Northwest Territory,” pp. 170, 171, in *Amer. Hist. Ass. Papers*. vol. i. See also Durrie's “Public Domain,” in Snyder and Van Vechten's *Hist. Atlas of Wis*. (Chicago, 1878), p. 181.

Thus, while Wisconsin's peculiar land policy has been a loss to the educational interests of the state, it has, perhaps, materially helped its growth and settlement.3 Mr. Härtel, in his immigration report of 1853, writes, “In my daily intercourse with the emigrant, I directed the attention of those intending to purchase land, to the school lands of our state, showing to those of limited means, that they could at once plant themselves in an entirely independent situation, as it could not be difficult for them, with patience and industry, and the long term allowed for payment, to meet their obligations. Upon inquiry, I have had the satisfaction to

learn that during the past year, large quantities of these lands, largely exceeding the sales of the previous year, have been sold, and chiefly to actual settlers."

3 See, however, Knight's view, as above, p. 166.

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Settlement of the Eastern Counties, with Sauk and Buffalo .

The counties near Milwaukee were the first to be settled by Germans, since Milwaukee was the most important and best-known port of Wisconsin on Lake Michigan, and there the attractions of a German society were strongest "Wisconsin," says Löher, "has now turned upon itself universal attention; and the immigrants, especially the Germans, are streaming in. * * * Among the Germans in Milwaukee, a very stirring life has already (1847) developed. Nowhere are there such joyous balls, and nowhere have the Germans decided so much in politics as here."1 The social and musical life of Milwaukee among the Germans, which gave it the name of the "German Athens," made the city well known among Germans in Europe and America. A "Männer gesang Quartet" was first formed; later, an "Allgemeinen deutschen Gesangverein." Some Germans of considerable musical ability early came to Milwaukee; among them Hans Balakta, who became the director of the latter society. Under his leadership, Haydn's "Creation" was given in 1851, with a chorus of about a hundred and thirty instruments, and other fine oratorios and operas followed.2 Thus Milwaukee gained a reputation, even in its pioneer stage, for musical ability, while amateur theatres, literary societies, political clubs, military companies, and a refined society, gave it the tone of a German city; and there to some extent the dreams of patriots were realized.

1 *Löher*, p. 345.

2 *Hist. Milwaukee* (West. Hist. Co., 1881). p. 582. See also *Das Deutsche Element*. p. 284; and Koss's *Milwaukee*, p. 323.

The majority of the German population of Milwaukee were at this time Catholics. This, as well as the later large German Catholic element in the state, is probably due in some measure to the fact that a German priest and bishop were early sent to Milwaukee, both of them men well known and of marked ability; and they have been followed by German bishops, not only in Milwaukee but also in Green 324 Bay and La Crosse. In 1844, Bishop Henni, a native of Switzerland, was sent to Milwaukee from Cincinnati, where he had been professor of philosophy and church history in the Atheneum. He had founded many German Catholic societies in Ohio, and had established the first German Catholic newspaper in America. He was a man of strong German spirit, and through his instrumentality a *priester seminar* was established, which afterwards became the nucleus of the large group of institutions at St. Francis. When he went to Milwaukee in 1844, there were but eight thousand Catholics in Wisconsin, according to the *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Conversations-Lexicon* ; but in 1867 there were two hundred and fifty thousand,1 the increase largely due to Henni's direction and unceasing activity.2 Thus the Milwaukee diocese became one of the most important in the United States, and Bishop Henni was made archbishop, being the first German in the United States to attain to that exalted office.3

1 According to *Hunt's Merch. Mag*., x., p. 541, the population of Wisconsin in 1844 was estimated at 110,000 and the census of 1865 gives the population for that year as 955,793.

2 Schem's *Deutsch-Amerik. Conversations-Lexicon*, v., p. 266.

3 *Das Deutsche Element*, p. 290.

But the Protestant element in and about Milwaukee had meanwhile become a large and an important one in its effect upon later immigration. Between 1839 and 1844, two large bodies of so-called “Old Lutherans” had come to America from Pomerania and Brandenburg, as a result of the attempt to unite the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

They were directed to Wisconsin by their leader, Captain Henry yon Rohr. He had come in advance of them, and after traveling through Ohio, Illinois, New York, and Wisconsin, chose the two latter. Wisconsin was selected, it is thought, on account of its climate, and its abundance of well-wooded lands at low prices. These Old Lutherans, perhaps some three thousand in all, settled in Ozaukee, Washington, and Dodge counties, and in the city of Milwaukee, in the neighborhood of Chestnut street. The reports of their prosperity, sent to friends and relatives at 325 home, were widely circulated, since they came from various localities. Moreover, in 1853, Rev. J. A. A. Grabau, the pastor with whom they emigrated, and Captain von Rohr himself, travelled in north Germany, and by their conversations and reports created a further interest and thus directed the stream of Lutheran emigration to Wisconsin. These facts serve to explain to some extent the large north-German—and particularly Pomeranian—element which has been coming into the state increasingly, in later years.1 According to Geffcken, emigration from the central and southern parts of Germany has been decreasing, while that of the northern districts is increasing. Thus in 1849 and 1850, the Rhinelands furnished from 18 to 20 per cent of the emigration, and Westphalia 38 per cent, while Prussia and Posen furnished only 20 per cent. In 1872, Prussia furnished 11.8 per cent, Pomerania 16.5 per cent, Hanover 12 per cent, while the Rhinelands furnished 8.3 per cent, and Westphalia 3.5 per cent.2

1 By the census of 1880 there were reported to be in Wisconsin 111,482 Prussians: 4,518 Hanoverians: 9,315 Mecklenburgers—125,315, in a total German population of 184,328. Others, too, were reported as merely from Germany.

2 Friedrich Heinrich Geffcken, in G. Schönberg's *Polit. Œcon. Auflage*, ii., p. 962. See also Roscher and Jannasch's *Kolonien*, p, 385.

The German settlement of southeastern Wisconsin, which began about 1839, was remarkably rapid. In the year 1845, two hundred and fifty thousand acres of land were sold in the Milwaukee land offices, chiefly to actual settlers, of whom the larger part were Germans.3 The Germans who came early to the state were largely from the Rhine

provinces, where political discontent was strong at that period, and industry at a low ebb. Others came to Wisconsin from Bavaria, Saxony, Luxemburg, Würtemburg, and Switzerland. The eastern counties received the greatest numbers, but a large German element settled early in Sauk and Dane counties.

3 *Wisconsin Banner*. August, 1845.

It was the fine Sauk prairie and beautiful scenery on the Wisconsin that attracted German settlers to Sauk county. 326 The settlement there was begun by Court August Haraszthy, a fugitive from Hungary, who came to America about 1840. While crossing the ocean he read one of Captain Marryatt's novels, which describes a trip from Green Bay up the Fox river by way of Fort Winnebago, and down the Wisconsin river to Prairie du Chien. This, with a glowing description of the lead mines, rich country, and invigorating climate, given to him by some Englishmen on their way to Mineral Point, led him to choose Wisconsin.1 He laid out the village of Sank, called at first Haraszthy, and induced some Germans to join him. This was the germ of the later large German element which occupies the greater part of Sauk county.

1 William H. Canfield's *Outline Sketches of Sank County* (Baraboo, 1861), sketch ii., p. 59.

By 1847 the greater part of the land within fifty or one hundred miles of Milwaukee had been settled, or was in the hands of speculators;2 while some Germans from the Rhine provinces and Saxony had settled in the northeastern counties—Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Calumet, and Outagamie.3

2 *Wie sieht es in Wisconsin Aus?* p. 18. *Wettstein*, pt. ii., p. 320.

3 Dr. de Haas wrote in 1847 that all the government land within eight miles of Lake Winnebago had been taken. He found there a large Catholic settlement from the Rhine region.— *Winke für Auswanderer*, p. 71.

In Outagamie county, a body of Rhinelanders is said to have settled in 1842.— *In der Neuen Heimath*, p. 373.

In Manitowoc county, in 1858, the Rhinelanders and Westphalians formed the largest part of the German population.— *Richter*. p. 10.

At this period, Germans began to spread in part to the southwestern counties, about Mineral Point,4 but chiefly northward to Sheboygan and Manitowoc counties, thence to Calumet and the region about Lake Winnebago, while many pressed into Outagamie and Green Lake counties, which are crossed by the upper and the lower Fox. In Green Lake county, the Fox river was then navigable as far as Princeton, and it formed the boundary line between

4 In 1848, Mr. Goldmann found six or eight German families near Mineral Point, and some Germans at work in the mines. According to Löher, some towns in Grant county were largely German in 1847.

327 the government and Indian lands. All these counties received the mass of their German population between 1848 and 1860, and the bulk of it was from north and middle Germany—Holstein, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, Hanover, Saxony, and Lippe Detmold.

The settlement of Buffalo county, which was meanwhile going on, deserves some special attention. It was begun perhaps as early as 1811, by some Germans from Galena, Illinois, who were employed by Captain D. S. Harris of that town, to cut wood for the passing steamboats on the Mississippi. The county was surveyed in 1848, and a large immigration began in 1855. The settlers came partly by river from Galena, partly by land from Sauk county, and some of them directly from Milwaukee, where they had purchased ox-teams and farm implements. There are many north-Germans in Buffalo county, but the majority are Swiss, attracted thither by its fine pasture lands and abundance of springs, somewhat like those of their native land. About four-fifths of the Germans settled there before any

railroad reached the county, and are to be found chiefly in the towns along the Mississippi river. Swiss have also settled in large numbers in the adjoining county of La Crosse.

Since 1860 the Germans have more and more pressed into the northern-central regions of the state, following the bent already mentioned,—the strong preference for forest rather than prairie land.

Work of the Commissioners, and State Board of Immigration, since 1867 .

In 1867 the state renewed its efforts to attract settlers, by establishing a board of immigration.1 The governor, *ex-officio* a member of the board, was authorized to appoint a local committee, three citizens in each county, to assist the board, and particularly to make out lists of the names and

1 *Laws of Wis*., 1867, p. 122.

328 postoffice addresses of European friends and relatives of the inhabitants of their respective districts, that information in regard to Wisconsin might be sent to them. For some years Bernhard Domschke, a German editor in Milwaukee, was a member of that board. German pamphlets were again distributed. One issued in 1868 describes the German life and industries of Milwaukee with some detail. Speaking of the liberal government of the state, it says: “The laws of Wisconsin are more favorable for immigrants than those of any other American state.”

In 18711 the board was abolished, and a state commissioner of immigration was provided for, the office to be elective, and the term of service two years. The commissioner was to reside in Milwaukee, and he was authorized to appoint a local agent for Chicago. The duty of the commissioner was to prepare and distribute pamphlets giving the resources of the state, and the amount of government, state, and railroad land available for settlement.

1 *Laws of Wis*., 1871, p. 241.

Ole C. Johnson (Shipness), of Beloit, a Norwegian, held this office from 1871 to 1874. He announced it as his policy to give a reliable statement of Wisconsin's resources and to direct his efforts chiefly to European countries, for the reason that the state is heavily-timbered, and not being so easily cultivated as the prairies it needs the “hard-working yeomanry of the old world,” who are able and willing to fell huge trees.2 Agents were appointed at Chicago and Quebec. J. A. Becher, of Milwaukee, was at that time in Germany, and under his supervision, co-operating with Commissioner Johnson, a large number of German pamphlets published by the latter were distributed by consuls and steamship agents. In 1874, M. J. Argard was appointed, but the powers of the commissioner were at that time restricted, and in 1875 the office was abolished.3

2 *Immigration Report, Wis*., 1871.

3 *Laws of Wis*., 1874. p. 549.

In 1879 the experiment of a board of immigration was 329 renewed, and it was maintained from 1881 to 1887, when it was abolished. J. A. Becher, well qualified for the work by his previous efforts, was president of the board during its existence. Throughout this period Wisconsin was extensively represented in Europe, and especially in Germany.

At the request of Charles Colby, the president of the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company, Kent K. Kennan, the agent of the land department of that company, was appointed by the board as state agent in Europe. He found it to his advantage to be under state authority, and to present the interests of the whole state rather than those of the Wisconsin Central alone, “since any other course would east suspicion upon the fairness and ingenuousness of his statements.” During this period the interests of the state were presented in pamphlets,1 pocket-maps, and especially in advertisements in the German papers; the latter method they found especially effective. Mr. Kennan wrote to the board2 that its pamphlets, on account of their solid and reliable as well as semi-official character, had far more weight with intelligent people than the exaggerated statements of most of the

other states. A letter from Dresden, Saxony,3 contains the following statement: “The state of Wisconsin with us stands high, though other western and southern states are sending out large quantities of pamphlets. * * * Wisconsin is the pearl of all; she no doubt will be the favorite of the coming year.”

1 20,000 German pamphlets and 9,000 copies of a pocket-map containing a short description of Wisconsin were printed in 1882, and largely distributed in Germany.

2 *Immigration Report, Wis*., 1881. p. 13.

3 *Id*., 1882, p. 12.

The work of the board was also extended to assist, protect, and advise immigrants,—telling them of the best routes, helping to regain lost baggage, preventing deceptions, and even granting pecuniary aid to the needy. Its purpose was to obtain the most desirable class of emigrants, and with that in view the advertisements were inserted in carefully-selected papers, and those were advised not to 330 come whose former habits of living would unfit them for the new life.

The country then open to settlement by the location of government, state, and railroad lands was north-central Wisconsin, and thither the immigrant was advised to go. From 1881 to 1884, as in 1846–54, multitudes of immigrants poured into Wisconsin, which again received a greater proportion than other states. In 1879, of the immigrants to Milwaukee 64.3 per cent went to other states, and 35.7 per cent remained in Wisconsin; in 1880, there went to other states 59.6 per cent, while 40.8 per cent remained; in 1881, only 46.3 per cent went to other states, while 53.7 per cent staid in Wisconsin.

North-Central Wisconsin .

The large German settlements situated in Shawano, Marathon, Lincoln, Wood, Taylor, Price, and Ashland counties have converted a dense, almost unknown forest into a

productive and prosperous region. In Shawano and Marathon counties, including at first Lincoln county, the settlement has been a continuation of the process which settled the northeastern counties. The causes and character of the emigration have changed, but there also Germans have been attracted by forest lands at low prices. Settlement in north-central Wisconsin has in great part been made since 1860. In Shawano county, the southeastern part was first settled, since it was more accessible, the Wolf river being then navigable by boats to Shawano, which was one end of the line of transportation from the Great Lakes and Mississippi river by water.1 Marathon, too, was settled first in the eastern-central part, doubtless because the Wisconsin river flows through that region. No railroad reached either county until many years after settlement began.—

1 *Erwerbs-Quellen, Vorzüge und Erzeugnisse welche die Counties Brown, Door, Oconto and Shawano, im Staate Wisconsin dem Einwanderer bieten. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der County Behörden* (Green Bay, 1870).

331 that is, about 1874;1 but Shawano had what the northern counties generally did not have—several government roads; the United States military road from Green Bay to Lake Superior cut Shawano county from east to west, and another government road ran from Shawano to Oshkosh.2

1 By 1874 the Wisconsin Valley railroad was constructed to Wausau along the river. Giles's “Wisconsin Railroads,” in Sydner and Van Vechten's *Hist. Atlas. of Wis*. (Chicago, 1878), p. 168.

2 Other government roads are to be found in the eastern counties, which no doubt had some influence on the location of German settlements. A road ran from Green Bay to Manitowoc, thence to Milwaukee; another skirted Lake Winnebago, on the eastern shore; while another ran from Green Bay along the southern bank of the Fox, thence southwest through Winnebago and Green Lake counties to Portage; Fond du Lac, Watertown and Milwaukee were connected by yet another.— *Wis. Hist. Coll*., xi., p, 229.

In both Shawano and Marathon counties, the north-German—particularly the Pomeranian—element prevails. Settlement was gradual. Many were drawn thither by the fact that friends and relatives from the same village had preceded them, and also by the large German element already in the state.

The western part of Marathon county, and the counties of Wood, Taylor, Price, and Ashland, are cut by the Wisconsin Central railroad. In 1871 the road was completed to Stevens Point, and in 1877 to Ashland.3 A grant of land was obtained from the government, including alternate sections within twenty miles of the road; while the remainder, retained by the government, was to be disposed of under the homestead law, or was withheld for a time for the benefit of the road. Much of this land has been sold and settled through the efforts of the railway agents.

3 Giles's “Wisconsin Railroads,” p. 167.

From 1880 to 1891, as above stated (p. 329), the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company's agent, Mr. Kennan, was likewise the agent of the state, with an office at Basle, Switzerland.4 Through his exertions and those of the board, a

4 The work which Mr. Kennan accomplished in Germany required great tact, since the German governments were making most strenuous efforts to prevent schemes for promoting emigration.

332 large number of emigrants were secured, of whom the majority were from the forest lands of Bavaria, and settled, perhaps five thousand in all, along the Wisconsin Central railroad, from Stevens Point to Ashland. Many were induced to come by the fact that there was plenty of work, with excellent wages, to be had in the lumber camps of the northern regions. By this means a man could soon earn wages sufficient to enable him to buy land and build him a home. If he bought an uncleared farm, moreover, the wood that he felled could be sold for a good price: sometimes sufficient, it is said, to enable him to pay for the

land. A letter to the board of immigration from a German at Weimar, at this time, shows what conditions the Germans were in search of in America. He asks:

“1. Is there homestead land to be had, with large timber suitable for building?

“2. Can employment be found?

“3. Is there any other way except by water, of bringing timber to market?

“4. What are the prices per acre?

“5. How large are the taxes?

“We should prefer a large tract of land near a navigable river, and well adapted to stock-raising.”1

1 *Bienn. Rep. State Board of Immigration, Wis*., 1883–84.

For the benefit of settlers, special provisions were made by the Wisconsin Central railroad. In Medford, a house was provided to accommodate from seventy-five to one hundred people free of charge, for two weeks, with the use of a large cooking-stove.2

2 *Der Staat Wisconsin, Seine Hülfsquelle und Vorzüge für Auswanderer. Von K. K. Kennan* (Basle, Schweiz, n. d.).

There have been other influences instrumental in attracting German settlers to this region. A Milwaukee law firm, Johnson, Rietbrock & Halsey, owned a large tract of land in the western part of Marathon county. The town of Black Creek Falls was the result of their enterprise. About 1870 they laid out streets and built bridges, stores, work-shops, and mills, and induced a large number of 333 Germans to settle there, chiefly farmers' sons from the southern counties about Milwaukee.1

1 K. Ludloff's *Amerikanische Reisebilder: Skizzen über den Staat Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, 1881), p. 56.

A paper was published in Milwaukee, called *Der Ansiedler* , edited by Joseph Brucker, in the interests of the northern settlement, and it is said to have had a wide circulation, particularly in the state. In 1881 an interesting pamphlet was written by Mr. Ludloff, describing a trip through north-central Wisconsin, and the advantages which it possesses for German settlement. “Here,” he writes, “Germans might learn to forget the fatherland, were that ever possible,” for the forests, climate, trees, and animals of Wisconsin closely resemble those of Germany. “In no state of the Union do our people find themselves better off, or more at home, than in Wisconsin; here we find the old freedom of the people.”2 Later, Mr. Brucker and Mr. Ludloff were copartners in a land agency at Medford.

2 *Ibid*., p. 86.

In 1883, Rev. W. Koch, from the mission school at Basle, wrote a pamphlet from Black Creek Falls, entitled, *Wo find ich eine Heimath in der Fremde?* He was interested with others in bringing the different immigrants together into a religious Evangelical community, and had selected favorable places in north-central Wisconsin for some one hundred and eighty families. “According to my estimate,” he says, “the country along the Wisconsin Central railroad possesses all the advantages necessary to make it easy for immigrants, even those without means. For people of small means, there is scarcely another like it.” The advantages were, that woodland was favorable, because crops could be obtained for two years merely by harrowing; employment was to be had in the mills in winter; and the forests furnished building material and fuel. His appeal is especially to friends in Basle and Aargau.

People from all Germanic countries, besides the Bavarians, have come into this region: Swiss, Austrians, Saxons, Pomeranians. Some outlying German settlements are also found in the northwestern counties.

Thus, while our native American citizens were seeking the western prairies, where crops were easily produced during the first years, the timber regions of northern Wisconsin were sought by the energetic, hardy, and persevering Germans, who are willing to wait for success. The remarkable growth of this region, and the prosperity of the settlers, is good testimony as to the wisdom of their choice.